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HCCC NAMES JAMES C. WATKINS AS NEWEST TEXAS MASTER

Houston Center for Contemporary Craft to Host Solo Exhibition for Watkins in Fall of 2020

(HOUSTON, TX) November 5, 2019 – Houston Center for Contemporary Craft (HCCC) is pleased to announce ceramicist James C. Watkins as the recipient of its Texas Master Award. From Lubbock, Texas, Watkins joins the roster of former Texas Masters—curator Clint Willour (Houston) and artists Harlan Butt (Denton), Cindy Hickok (Houston), Rachele Thiewes (El Paso), Piero Fenci (Nacogdoches), and Sandie Zilker (Houston)—recognized for making a significant impact on the field of craft. In recognition of his ceramic career and outstanding service to the community, HCCC will present a solo exhibition of Watkins' work in the fall of 2020.

James C. Watkins has an impressive career as a ceramicist and as an educator. He received his MFA from Indiana University and BFA from the Kansas City Art Institute. Watkins' work has been featured in 40 solo exhibitions and 164 group exhibitions around the world. His work is held in 21 permanent collections, including the White House Collection of American Crafts at the Clinton Library (Little Rock, AR), the Shigaraki Institute of Ceramic Studies (Shigaraki, Japan), the Everson Museum (Syracuse, NY), the Tweed Museum (Duluth, MI), and the Eiteljorg Museum (Indianapolis, IN).

With over 40 years of experience working with clay, Watkins masterfully constructs double-walled vessels, whose forms and surfaces are inspired by his memories of growing up in the South, encounters with nature, and his experience working in Asia. Building upon a history of tradition, he skillfully manipulates his clay surfaces using alternative firing techniques, creating lustrous and colorful surfaces enhanced by the atmosphere of the kiln. For some pieces, he collects dirt from the dust storms around his studio in order to create orange-to-black surfaces. As seen in his *Double-Walled Basket* (2018), Watkins also wields an iridescent rainbow of color through a fuming technique that he employs as the kiln cools down from a high firing.

Even after decades of experience, Watkins continues to evolve his practice through experimentation and by learning new techniques. In his *Reflections* series (2014), he etches silhouettes of his wares using a laser cutter, while multiple firings produce an array of warm hues that allow him to reference the synesthetic glow that emanates from vessels within the kiln.

As an educator, Watkins strives to impart his enthusiasm and passion for making. While in graduate school, Watkins taught as an associate instructor at Indiana University in Bloomington and later worked as a visiting professor at Hampton University in Hampton, Virginia, before moving to Lubbock. Between 1978 and 1983, he

served as the director and organizer of the Mackenzie Terrace Pottery Center, a Lubbock-sponsored, public arts facility. Later, he taught architectural delineation for 35 years and architectural ceramics for 12 years at the College of Architecture at Texas Tech University (TTU). He served as the architectural delineation coordinator, from 1998 until 2003, and later became the assistant dean of undergraduate studies, from 2003 to 2006.

During his tenure, Watkins received numerous awards, including the TTU President's Excellence in Teaching Award and the Art on the Llano Estacada Legacy Award from TTU's Museum Association. In 2005, he built a ceramics program in Vietnam at the Ho Chi Minh City University of Architecture as a Senior Fulbright Scholar. In 2006, he received TTU's highest honor, the Paul Whitfield Horn Professorship, an award recognizing outstanding research and other creative scholarly achievements; in 2019, he became a Paul Whitfield Horn Professor Emeritus, following his retirement.

Watkins is the author of several books, including *Reflections Made of Memories* (2019); *Alternative Kilns & Firing Techniques* (2004) with Paul Andrew Wandless; and *Architectural Delineation: Presentation Techniques and Projects* (2000) with James T. Davis. He has written numerous articles for national and international magazines, including *Ceramics Monthly*, *Studio Potter*, *New Ceramics: The European Ceramics Magazine*, and *China Ceramic Artist*.

For more information about James C. Watkins, visit www.icwclayworks.com.

About Houston Center for Contemporary Craft

Houston Center for Contemporary Craft (HCCC) is a nonprofit visual arts center dedicated to advancing education about the process, product, and history of craft. HCCC provides exhibition, retail, and studio spaces to support the work of local and national artists and serves as a resource for artists, educators and the community at large.

Located in the Museum District at 4848 Main Street, HCCC is open Wednesday through Saturday, 10 AM – 5 PM, and Sunday, 12 – 5 PM. Closed major holidays. Admission is free. Free parking is available directly behind the facility, off Rosedale and Travis Street. HCCC is three blocks south of Wheeler Ave. MetroRail station on Main Street.

HCCC is supported by individual donors and members and funded in part by The Brown Foundation; Houston Endowment, Inc.; the City of Houston through the Houston Arts Alliance; Texas Commission on the Arts; the National Endowment for the Arts, the Kinder Foundation; the Morgan Foundation; Windgate Charitable Foundation; and the Wortham Foundation. HCCC is a member of the Houston Museum District and the Midtown Arts and Entertainment District.

For more information, call 713-529-4848 or visit www.crafthouston.org. Find HCCC on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram @CraftHouston.

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